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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this guide is to help school districts and education service centers plan effective inservice education programs consistent with laws and rules enacted by the Texas state legislature and the Texas State Board of Education. Essential provisions and acceptable activities of inservice teacher education are listed. The basic elements of an inservice plan are delineated, including needs assessment, program design, scheduling, management, and evaluation. Guiding principles are offered for planning meaningful inservice education programs. Alternative designs and inservice education cooperatives are described. The answers to frequently asked questions about conducting inservice programs are provided in the areas of needs assessment, participants, special education, summer programs, credit or compensatory time, and the roles of education service centers and the Texas Education Agency. The appendix contains excerpts from Texas state law and Texas State Board of Education rulings pertaining to inservice education. (FG)

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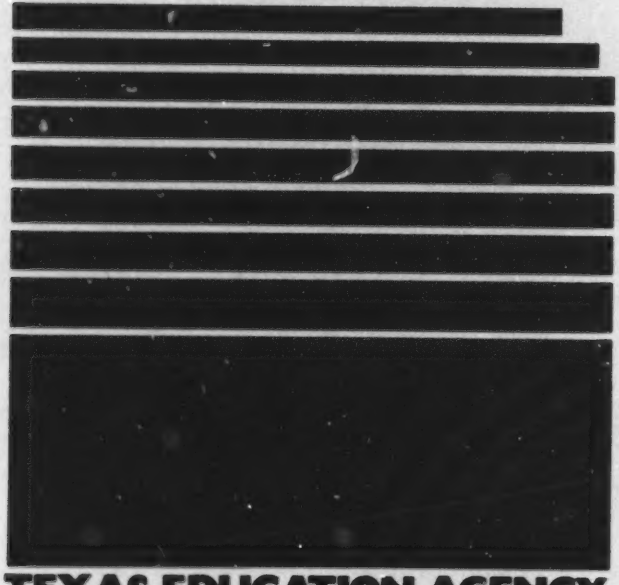
A GUIDE TO BETTER INSERVICE EDUCATION IN TEXAS



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Foreword

The *Guide to Better Inservice Education in Texas* has been prepared to help school districts and education service centers plan effective inservice education programs consistent with State law and State Board of Education rules. The *Guide* supersedes publication GE0 891 03.

Suggestions which will increase the usefulness of this *Guide* will be appreciated.

Raymon L. Bynum
Commissioner of Education

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Checklist for Inservice Education

- ☐ School district plans a minimum of five days of inservice education and not more than three preparation (work) days.
- ☐ Planning for inservice education includes as a minimum the elements of the Inservice Education Plan on pages 4-6.
- ☐ Inservice education participants are included in the planning process.
- ☐ A school day of seven hours is suggested as the inservice day, with a total of 35 hours planned for each participant.
- ☐ Inservice education is scheduled between June 1 and May 31.
- ☐ An audit record-keeping system for all inservice days has been established.
- ☐ Each school district submits a copy of its Inservice Education Plan to the Texas Education Agency, Department of Professional Support, by August 1 of each year.

A Guide to Better Inservice Education

Purpose of Inservice Education Guidelines

The purpose of this *Guide* is to help school districts and education service centers plan effective inservice education programs consistent with state law and State Board of Education rules.

Definition of Inservice Education

Inservice education as defined by the State Board of Education is "a planned program of learning opportunities afforded staff members of school districts and related agencies for purposes of improving performance in already held or assigned positions."

Staff development, which is a broader term, is usually defined in professional literature to include manpower planning, staffing, organizational activities, and graduate education.

A. The essential provisions of effective inservice education programs include the following:

1. Learning opportunities are provided.
2. Purposes of the inservice program are defined and related to improving performance.
3. Inservice activities address assigned jobs or positions.
4. Planned activities provide assurance of accountability for predetermined outcomes.

B. Acceptable inservice activities

The definition of inservice education permits and, in turn, restricts certain activities. Acceptable inservice activities shall include the following:

1. Any planned activity designed to produce new and/or improved performances in job assignments.
2. Activities which lead to degrees or certification, provided such credentials are not the primary purpose of the inservice.
3. Activities planned as part of the local program regardless of time, place, or persons involved.
4. The development of curriculum materials for use on the job.
5. Training activities directed toward changes in role expectations and responsibilities.
6. Evaluation activities which have as a primary objective improved performance in job assignments.
7. Communication activities designed to disseminate information among staff members and orient new staff.

C. Limitations on inservice education activities

Activities which do not fall within the scope of the definition for inservice education shall include the following:

1. Formal preparation programs directed toward new certification, advanced degrees, or specialized training for future positions rather than for improvement of performance on the current job assignment.

2. Incidental activities from which learning may be derived but for which there is no specific plan.

3. Routine activities offering no specific training opportunities for improved performance in already held or assigned positions.

The Inservice Education Plan

Each school district is responsible for providing inservice education based upon a written plan. (See Appendix, State Board of Education Rule 19, Texas Administrative Code /TAC/, Section 149.23.) The school district's responsibility is further detailed by Principle 7 of the *Principles, Standards, and Procedures for the Accreditation of School Districts* which requires that the staff development program be designed and operated as an accountability and educational improvement system. A copy of the plan shall be filed with the Texas Education Agency by August 1 of each year. The basic elements of the plan shall include:

A. Needs Assessment

1. Needs of staff members are identified

Specifically, Principle 7 calls for school districts to operate a staff development program which begins with a careful assessment of the professional performance of staff members. This assessment leads to identification of "discrepancies between teaching skills possessed and teaching skills required to achieve adopted student learning objectives". Discrepancies identified through this assessment become the basis for designing appropriate staff development activities. The effectiveness of such activities is evaluated in terms of the degree to which they bring about improvement in teaching skills.

If a district utilizes a system which evaluates personnel on the basis of identified competencies, the data can provide valuable information relating to individual, campus, and district inservice needs. This method of identifying needs is desirable since it is derived from observations made by the evaluator in the instructional setting. It is important that the personnel evaluation system be validated and that the persons doing the rating are well trained in its use.

2. Program needs are identified

a. Internally perceived needs

All regular, categorical, and special programs should be included in the inservice education planning process. The categorical programs most likely to be found in a school district are vocational, special, bilingual, compensatory, Title I migrant, and gifted/talented education.

School districts are encouraged to relate their Five-Year Priorities Plan for Accreditation to their Inservice Education Plan. However, the Inservice Education Plan should extend beyond the goals and objectives addressed in the Five-Year Priorities Plan for Accreditation.

b. Externally perceived needs

The inservice education program may also be influenced by data and/or actions external to the school district. For example, the local test results from the Texas Assessment of Basic Skills (TABS) may indicate areas of the curriculum which need special attention. The Texas Legislature or the State Board of Education may have recently taken actions which require modifications in the existing curriculum.

3. Priorities are assigned

Begin developing inservice priorities by distinguishing between inservice *needs* and inservice *wants*. The district's instructional goals contained in the Five-Year Priorities Plan for Accredita-

tion should be reviewed. The inservice goals should complement the district's goals as they relate to the instructional program, including attendance, discipline, student/faculty morale, and parental involvement. This process should result in a clearer picture (and a shorter list) of inservice needs. Finally, the district should decide which instructional goal will receive priority during the period for which the inservice is being planned.

B. Program

1. Goals and objectives are listed. The goals and objectives should provide general direction to the inservice education plan and provide the basis on which it will be evaluated.

2. Activities are planned and described.

3. Individuals and groups to be served are identified. The staff for which inservice education is planned should include all administrative, instructional, and paraprofessional personnel, excepting clerical aides.

4. Materials and other resources to be utilized are described.

C. Schedule

The schedule shows how inservice education days relate to other staff development activities which may be planned (summer conferences, etc.). The school district may, at its discretion, count as part of the days allowed for inservice education those instructional workshops planned by or sponsored by regional education service centers, the Texas Education Agency, or institutions of higher learning.

1. Not more than three of the eight days may be used as preparation (work) days.

2. A minimum of one day, or its equivalent, must be provided for regular and special educators serving handicapped students.

3. Not more than one day of professional association meetings may be counted as an inservice day. None of the inservice days may be used to conduct the business of professional associations.

4. School districts that release personnel for inservice education activities during a regular instructional day may *not* count this time as a part of the five inservice days. This is a form of double compensation which is illegal.

D. Management

The Inservice Education Plan should indicate the individuals or positions responsible for coordinating needs assessment, planning and implementation, and evaluation components. Participants as well as planners should be involved in the development and implementation of the inservice education program. The following procedures are recommended:

1. The school district's calendar should show the days scheduled for inservice and the days scheduled for preparation (work) days.

2. Teacher time records or other records should show attendance during inservice days. The records should indicate that an inservice day is the same length as a regular instructional day (7 hours).

3. The Inservice Education Plan should be on file in the school district.

4. Lists of presenters and participants should show dates, times, and places. Sufficient detail as to the reasons for and/or types of inservice should appear with such lists.

5. If outside consultants are paid to make inservice presentations, documents such as contracts, billings, and payment records should be available and identifiable in the accounting system. Social security numbers of outside consultants should be included in documentation for federal income tax purposes.

E. Evaluation

The school district should evaluate its inservice program from the following perspectives:

1. Was the inservice education program evaluated on the basis of the goals for which it was designed?

2. Is the staff using the knowledge gained in the inservice education program?

3. Did the inservice education program improve teacher performance?

4. Was a follow-up activity planned to modify the inservice education program where needed?

F. Attachments

Needs assessments, evaluation documents, and other planning materials may be appended.

Suggestions For Planning Inservice Education

Guiding principles affecting the development and implementation of inservice education programs are listed below.

Process and Involvement

Staff members are more likely to benefit from inservice education when:

- Activities are related to district priorities, programs, etc.
- Activities are based on identified needs.
- Activity objectives are specified.
- Staff members are involved on the planning/conducting team.
- Planning represents the appropriate involvement of schools, colleges, education service centers, and related agencies.
- Responsibility for coordination is delegated to staff personnel with both time and expertise.
- Staff perception of needs is utilized along with other sources of individual and program needs.

Content and Evaluation

Inservice education is likely to be more meaningful when:

- Training reflects individuals' professional performance goals.
- Training reflects a staff member's multiple roles as presenter, evaluator, guidance person, program planner, etc.
- Training emphasizes renewal or retraining.
- Evaluation is used to develop or improve programs rather than just to "gather" data.
- Effectiveness of an inservice education activity is measured more directly by change in teacher behavior rather than change in student behavior.
- Activities require the active involvement of participants.

Alternative Design for Inservice Education

The superintendent and the planning committee (district or cooperative) may wish to consider alternative delivery systems for supplementing inservice education programs.

One such alternative is the equivalency time (compensatory) program. An equivalency time program is defined as an array of inservice education opportunities scheduled outside of regular school hours. School districts that approve participants' attending such programs on their own time may count this as "equivalency" or "compensatory" time and substitute it for regularly scheduled inservice days. An equivalency time program requires a local record-keeping system that documents each individual's inservice time. Approved inservice activities occurring prior to the regular contract year may be substituted only for designated inservice days during employment in the regular school year.

The school district may, at its discretion, count as part of the days allowed for inservice training those instructional workshops planned by or sponsored by regional education service centers, the Texas Education Agency, or institutions of higher education.

School districts are encouraged to develop local policies concerning the number of days which may be used as equivalency (compensatory) days and the process by which staff members obtain prior approval for the equivalency time.

Inservice Education Cooperatives

One of the best ways for school districts, especially those in rural or remote areas, to provide a quality inservice program is to form inservice cooperatives with neighboring districts and the regional education service center. The advantages of inservice cooperatives include cost sharing among the districts, planning expertise, and sharing of consultants. Any combination of delivery systems can be used, including equivalency time (compensatory) programs, personal growth plans, workshops, videotape sessions, etc. To assist in planning, the cooperative is encouraged to follow these suggestions:

- Organize a spring planning meeting of administrators of cooperating schools to coordinate next year's school calendars.
- Establish an inservice education planning committee, including at least one administrator and one teacher from each school district, along with the ESC coordinator.
- Elect a chairperson to contact participants, coordinate efforts, and, perhaps, act as fiscal agent for the co-op.
- Determine the co-op's inservice needs based on personnel evaluations, staff needs assessment, and programmatic needs assessment.
- Plan other meetings to decide dates, inservice education content, consultants, locations, and responsibilities.
- Each school district submits its inservice education plan to the Texas Education Agency, Department of Professional Support, by August 1.
- Initiate and carry out inservice education plans.
- Each school district evaluates its inservice education program along with the inservice education planning for next year.

Frequently Asked Questions Concerning Inservice Education

Needs Assessment

Q. Aside from a formal needs assessment relating to participants' desires for inservice, what are some *other information sources* for determining inservice education needs?

A. Some examples are Texas Assessment of Basic Skills (TABS) results, regular standardized test results, special and categorical test results, personnel evaluation data, classroom observation data (from other teachers, principals, and supervisors), and literature searches.

Inservice Participants

Q. Who should participate in inservice activities?

A. All professionals and paraprofessionals, excepting clerical aides, must participate in the inservice program. This includes administrators, supervisory personnel, teachers, and instructional aides. Of course, a district may, at its discretion, require others to attend inservice activities.

Inservice Content

Q. What is the State Board of Education rule regarding inservice content?

A. The State Board of Education did not specify inservice content in its rules. School districts have a great deal of discretion in determining program content. After all, that is the purpose of local needs assesment. Planners of inservice education programs should read carefully the definition of inservice on page 2 and the characteristics of inservice activities on pages 2 and 3.

Special Education

Q. Isn't the requirements that school districts provide one day or its equivalent of special education inservice a content mandate?

A. Yes and no. While Section 16.104 (a) (6) of the Texas Education Code mandates one day of special education inservice, it does not specify the nature of the inservice. Decisions concerning the nature of the inservice should derive from the types of handicapped students and the training needs of individuals who serve those students. Special education inservice should consist of more than reading the provisions of selected legislative acts (e.g. PL 94-142). The purpose of the requirement is to improve the educator's ability to meet the needs of the special education student, whatever the handicapping condition may be.

Summer Inservice

Q. Is it possible for a person to get credit for inservice education activities attended during the summer months when school is not in session?

A. Yes, providing that the inservice participant is *not* under contract. If the individual is under contract during the summer (that is the case for many coaches and vocational education teachers), the inservice activities may not be counted as equivalency (compensatory) time during the following school year. This would be, in effect, double compensation which is illegal.

School districts are encouraged to develop local policies concerning the equivalency (compensatory) arrangement.

Q. What is the best way of keeping a record of inservice education attended during the summer months for equivalency (compensatory) time purposes?

A. The education service centers (ESCs), universities, and Texas Education Agency sponsor or cosponsor a number of inservice activities during the summer. These institutions usually have some form of registration for keeping track of persons who participate in the inservice. Some workshops, conferences, etc., provide attendance certificates. These sign-in rosters or attendance certificates are sufficient for audit purposes and should be kept as documentation.

Compensatory Time

Q. May a person receive compensatory time for accompanying a group as a University Interscholastic League (UIL) sponsor?

A. If a person accompanies a UIL group merely as a sponsor, this time may *not* be counted as inservice. However, if the activity provides a planned program of learning opportunities (see definition of inservice education, Page 2), the school district, at its discretion, may count this as inservice.

Alternate Delivery Systems

Q. Under what condition may one receive inservice credit for activities which lead to degrees or certification?

A. The State Board of Education rules state that the primary purpose of the degree or coursework should be "to improve performance in already held or assigned positions." An academic degree or certificate should be incidental in determining whether or not an individual's course work meets these criteria. If school officials decide an individual's course work meets the definition of inservice, credit may be allowed. The specific amount of equivalency (compensatory) time allowed for course work should be decided at the local level.

Inservice Planning Assistance

Q. Where can school districts get help in planning their inservice education program?

A. Your regional education service center (ESC) should be the first place to contact if you need outside help in planning your inservice program. First of all, the ESC can help you with an inservice

management system. Secondly, the ESC has a number of highly qualified persons capable of providing inservice in the academic areas, special education, accreditation, and other services.

Delivery Systems

Q. What are the most common inservice education delivery systems?

A. Most inservice education programs in Texas are planned at the local level. School districts should develop their inservice education programs on the basis of a needs assessment and then schedule the inservice according to priority needs. The presenters include consultants from the education service center, universities, community, school staff, and private consultants. Types of delivery systems include inservice education cooperatives (see Page 8), equivalency time programs (see Page 7), collaboration with the regional education service center, individual improvement agreements, and university courses. Combinations of these delivery systems may be found in some district models, providing both variety and flexibility.

Texas Education Agency

Q. What is the role of the Texas Education Agency in inservice education?

A. The Department of Professional Support administers the State Board of Education rule relating to inservice education. This includes communication activities with ESCs and district inservice coordinators regarding interpretation of the law and the management of inservice programs. Other activities involve the dissemination of information concerning inservice education research and practice and the assessment of the annual inservice plans submitted by school districts. Other Agency departments assist in the planning, delivery and evaluation of inservice education activities.

Q. Can a given day be an inservice day for a part of the district's staff and a preparation (work) day for the remainder of the staff?

A. Yes. State Board of Education Rule 19, TAC, Section 149.21 (see Appendix) requires each school district to provide not less than eight days of inservice training and preparation of teachers for each school year. Not more than three of the eight days may be used as preparation (work) days.

The State Board of Education rule does not require the entire staff to be involved in inservice activities on a given day. Nor does it require the entire staff to be involved in preparation (work) on a given day. If a school district wishes to send a portion of the staff to a professional meeting and use this day as inservice (see State Board of Education Rule 19, TAC, Section 149.21, Appendix), the remainder of the staff may remain at the school and use this day as a preparation (work) day. The important point is that during the school year, each teacher be provided not more than three preparation (work) days and at least five days of inservice.

Appendix

Legal Basis for Inservice Education

Section 16.052 of the Texas Education Code states that "each school district must provide for not less than 175 days of instruction for students and not less than . . .eight days of inservice training and prepartion for teachers for each school year. . ." (exceptions are cited in a subsequent subsection). In addition, Section 16.055 states that "the days of inservice training and preparation required herein shall be conducted by local boards of education under rules and regulations established by the State Board of Education that are consistent with state accreditation standards for program planning, preparation, and improvement." Section 16.055 also charges the Texas Education Agency with the responsibility for assisting districts in developing effective and improved programs of education.

State Board of Education Actions

In September, 1976, the State Board of Education adopted staff development as one of the statewide education priorities. The priority of the Board is that by 1982, Texas school districts will be operating staff development programs which satisfy general guidelines developed through interactions among personnel representing school districts, regional education service centers, educators in colleges and universities, and the Texas Education Agency.

On January 13, 1979, the State Board of Education approved the following rule concerning inservice education.

State Board of Education Rule 19, TAC, Sections 149.21-23

Selected portions of State Board of Education Rule 19, Sections 149.21-23 are quoted below:

Section 149.21

A. *Policy.* "Each school district shall provide not less than eight days of inservice training and preparation for each school year. . . Texas Education Code Section 16.052(a).

B. Administrative procedure.

1. Not more than three of the required eight days may be used as preparation days. The school district may, at its discretion, count as part of the days allowed for inservice training those instructional workshops planned by or sponsored by regional education service centers, the Texas Education Agency, or institutions of higher education. A minimum of one day, or its equivalent, of inservice special education training must be provided for regular and special educators serving handicapped students. Not more than one day of professional association meetings may be counted as an inservice day. None of the inservice days may be used to conduct the business of professional associations.

2. Participants shall include professional and paraprofessional personnel, excepting clerical aides.

Section 149.22

A. *Policy.* Inservice education is defined as a planned program of learning opportunities afforded staff members of school districts and related agencies for purposes of improving performance in already held or assigned positions.

Section 149.23

A. *Policy.* School districts shall operate an inservice training program based upon a written plan. A copy of the plan shall be filed with the Texas Education Agency by August 1 of each year."

For Additional Information or Inquiries, Please Contact:

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Texas Education Agency
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COMPLIANCE STATEMENT

TITLE VI, CIVIL RIGHTS ACT OF 1964; THE MODIFIED COURT ORDER, CIVIL ACTION 5281, FEDERAL DISTRICT COURT, EASTERN DISTRICT OF TEXAS, TYLER DIVISION

Reviews of local education agencies pertaining to compliance with Title VI Civil Rights Act of 1964 and with specific requirements of the Modified Court Order, Civil Action No. 5281, Federal District Court, Eastern District of Texas, Tyler Division are conducted periodically by staff representatives of the Texas Education Agency. These reviews cover at least the following policies and practices:

(1) acceptance policies on student transfers from other school districts;

(2) operation of school bus routes or runs on a non-segregated basis;

(3) nondiscrimination in extracurricular activities and the use of school facilities;

(4) nondiscriminatory practices in the hiring, assigning, promoting, paying, demoting, reassigning, or dismissing of faculty and staff members who work with children;

(5) enrollment and assignment of students without discrimination on the basis of race, color, or national origin;

(6) nondiscriminatory practices relating to the use of a student's first language; and

(7) evidence of published procedures for hearing complaints and grievances.

In addition to conducting reviews, the Texas Education Agency staff representatives check complaints of discrimination made by a citizen or citizens residing in a school district where it is alleged discriminatory practices have occurred or are occurring.

Where a violation of Title VI of the Civil Rights Act is found, the findings are reported to the Office for Civil Rights, Department of Health, Education and Welfare.

If there is a direct violation of the Court Order in Civil Action No. 5281 that cannot be cleared through negotiation, the sanctions required by the Court Order are applied.

TITLE VII, CIVIL RIGHTS ACT OF 1964; EXECUTIVE ORDERS 11246 AND 11375; TITLE IX, 1973 EDUCATION AMENDMENTS; REHABILITATION ACT OF 1973 AS AMENDED; 1974 AMENDMENTS TO THE WAGE-HOUR LAW EXPANDING THE AGE DISCRIMINATION IN EMPLOYMENT ACT OF 1967; AND VIETNAM ERA VETERANS READJUSTMENT ASSISTANCE ACT OF 1972 AS AMENDED IN 1974.

It is the policy of the Texas Education Agency to comply fully with the nondiscrimination provisions of all federal and state laws and regulations by assuring that no person shall be excluded from consideration for recruitment, selection, appointment, training, promotion, retention, or any other personnel action, or be denied any benefits or participation in any programs or activities which it operates on the grounds of race, religion, color, national origin, sex, handicap, age, or veteran status (except where age, sex, or handicap constitute a bona fide occupational qualification necessary to proper and efficient administration). The Texas Education Agency makes positive efforts to employ and advance in employment all protected groups.